NATURAL NEWS

The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

WEEKLY STAFF NEWSLETTER
April 11, 1997

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

"THE GENETIC STRUCTURE IN HUMANS" CONVERSATION

Please join CCUC and CEEB in a museum-wide conversation on "The Genetic Structure in Humans" to be held at the April 15th Noon Balloon. Opening remarks will be made by Assistant Curator **John Bates** (Zoology, Birds) and Curator **John Terrell** (Anthropology). The program will be held in the Zoology Classroom, 3rd Floor at noon. We hope you will come be part of this exciting dialogue at the cross-roads of multiple disciplines.

LIBRARY RARE BOOK ROOM REOPENING

All who witnessed the construction site in the Library Reading Room from mid-November through mid-February may rightly have surmised that something was afoot in the Mary W. Runnells Rare Book Room. Underway at that time -- while the collections were secured in a temporary storage area -- was the replacement of the aging and increasingly inadequate air handling system installed when the room was constructed in 1981. The new system now in place is providing ideal conditions to guarantee the preservation of the important collections held in the room. The project also entailed installation of a fire suppression system and enhancements to the security systems.

On the evening of February 18, **President John McCarter** was host to the Friends of Field Museum Library, Chicago area librarians and other invited guests, to celebrate the reopening of the renovated Rare Book Room. **Vice President Peter Crane** took this occasion to announce the retirement of **Peyton Fawcett**, Librarian since 1970, after forty years of service on the Library staff, and to announce the promotion to Librarian of **Ben Williams**, who joined the staff in 1977, and has served since 1982 as Associate Librarian and Librarian, Special Collections. The evening also served as an appreciation of the Library Friends group, who received a tour of the renovated Rare Book Room and viewed an exhibit of the many works acquired through the Friends Fund, including such classics as Murchison's Silurian System and Darwin's Journal of Researches from the voyage of the Beagle.

For their contributions to the Rare Book Room renovation project, special thanks are due to Library staff and volunteers, to **Ron Cundiff** and staff in Security Services, **Tim Tryba** and staff in Engineering Services, and **John Mazza** and **Mel Williams** in Facility Planning.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

NATURE CONSERVANCY'S BOARD MEETING AT THE FIELD MUSEUM

In March the Illinois Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) held their Board of Trustees meeting at The Field Museum. On the agenda was a discussion of Chicago Wilderness (CW), and **Debby Moskovits** (Director, Environmental and Conservation Programs, ECP) reported on The Field Museum's collaboration with Chicago Wilderness and The Nature Conservancy entitled "Wild in Chicago," a public festival to celebrate nature in Chicago and the one year anniversary of Chicago Wilderness. The festival is being held this Saturday, April 12th in Stanley Field Hall from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Members of TNC's Board toured some behind the scenes areas, and in a letter to **President John McCarter**, Board Chairman Guy Fraker expressed his excitement in learning about the "significant active conservation being practiced by the Museum and its able scientists." Thanks to Environmental Educator in Residence **Carol Fialkowski** (ECP), MacArthur Curator **John Flynn** (Geology), Adjunct Curator **Robin Foster** (Botany), Collections Manager **Bill Stanley** (Zoology, Mammals) and Conservation Ecologist **Doug Stotz** (ECP), for greatly impressing TNC Board members with brief presentations of their work in Geology, Zoology and Environmental and Conservation Programs.

MOSKOVITS RETURNS FROM BRAZIL

Debby Moskovits (Director, Environmental and Conservation Programs, ECP) returned last month from a short trip to Brazil where she visited Paula Procópio, an Advanced Training Program (ATP) alumna who is working on a golden-lion-tamarin introduction project in an Atlantic Coast Forest fragment just north of Rio de Janeiro. Moskovits and Procópio discussed potential collaborations between Conservation International, The Field Museum and local agencies to help protect a large fragment of this severely endangered ecosystem. Debby also explored opportunities for greater Museum involvement in RAP and other conservation programs in Brazil, including an ecological zoning project in the extremely diverse state of Mato Grosso. As a result of the trip, Conservation Ecologist Doug Stotz (ECP) and Moskovits are scheduled to return to Brazil this July.

CENTER FOR EVOLUTIONARY AND EVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY

GEOLOGISTS ON THE GO!

Meenakshi Wadhwa, Assistant Curator of Meteoritics/Mineralogy, just returned from attending the 28th Lunar and Planetary Science Conference at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas (March 17-21, 1997). She presented a talk as well as a poster on recent work that she's been doing on the age-dating and geochemistry of martian and asteroidal meteorites. This was the first major planetary science conference since last August's announcement of possible evidence of life on Mars in a martian meteorite, and it was unusual to see so many biologists and media personnel at a conference which usually attracts only the most hard-core planetary scientists!

Security Alert

Date: April 10, 1997

TO: All Museum Staff

From: Ron Cundiff, Manager, Security Services

All staff should be aware that we have had four purse thefts in the Museum in the last two weeks. Three were taken from McDonald's and one from a Museum departmental office located near the public area. In McDonald's, one purse was hanging on the back of a chair, one was under a chair, and one was in a stroller. Visitors were the victims in all three. The purse taken from a Museum department was taken from under a desk.

Security and Visitor Services staff members have also reported an increase in the number of suspicious persons and known pickpockets observed in or near the Museum. In addition, we have had reports from the Art Institute and the Shedd Aquarium of an increase in thefts, not only from visitors and staff, but in the case of the Art Institute, also from the gift shop.

All staff should be aware of these incidents and take appropriate precautions. If you would like assistance from the Security Services Department, please contact us at extension 322. If you observe anyone suspicious in an unauthorized area, or see potential problems in McDonald's or the stores, contact us immediately at extension 322.

THE 30 SECOND RULE

- It takes a thief about ***30 seconds*** to find something to steal.

- It takes about ***30 seconds*** to lock your property up before leaving the area.

- Security should be called ***A.S.A.P.*** after a theft is discovered. The likelihood that the thief can be found and the property recovered are the highest immediately after the event.

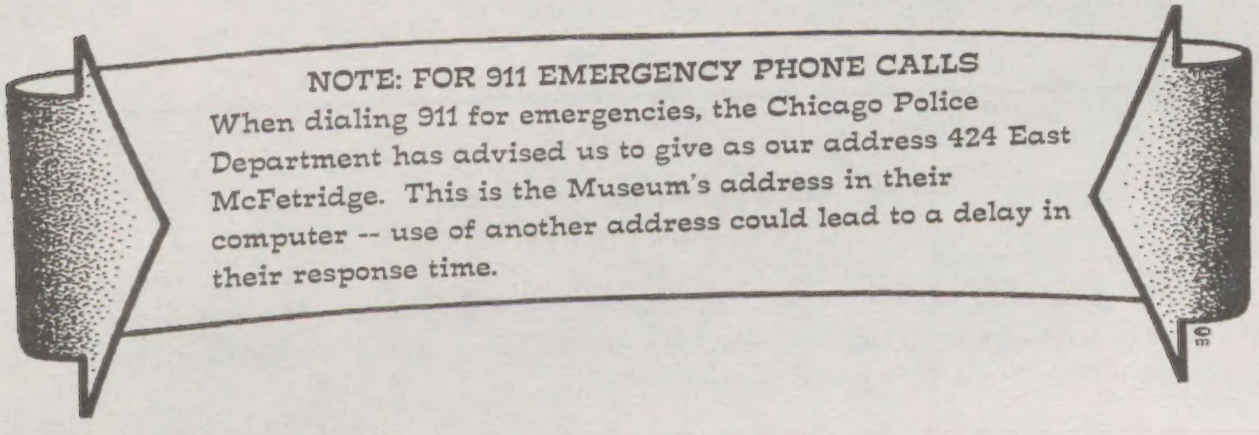
Upon returning from Houston, Meenakshi spent five days in St. Louis at Washington University's McDonnell Center for the Space Sciences, analysing the geochemical characteristics of a newly discovered martian meteorite from the Japanese Antarctic meteorite collection.

Last year Meenakshi Wadhwa participated as a Co-PI on a proposal submitted by the University of Chicago to NSF's Academic Research Infrastructure program. This grant was funded at the level of $410,000 for the period of 1997-98 to establish a new geochemical analytical facility (high resolution inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometer) at the Department of Geophysical Sciences at the University. Access to this new facility will enhance the research capabilities of Field Museum staff. Also, Meenakshi was recently awarded her first research grant from NASA at the level of $40,000 for FY 1997.

Postdoctoral Research Assistant **Michael Nedbal** (Geology) attended the international "Molecules and Morphology in Systematics" conference in Paris between March 24-28. He delivered a paper co-authored with **John Flynn,** MacArthur Curator and Chairman of Geology, entitled "Molecular Phylogenetics of the Carnivores (Mammalia, Carnivora): Evidence from Intron I of the Transthyretin Gene". Their phylogenetic results, based on characters from three genes and morphology, will be published in a special volume of Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution.

NOON BALLOON

The Noon Balloon presentation for Tuesday April 8, 1997 was delivered by **Steve Hageman,** Research Associate, Department of Geology, Field Museum. Steve discussed his research on patterns of ecophenotypic and geographic variation in both fossil and extant bryozoans. He analyzed morphometric data for an Upper Pennsylvanian bryozoan to demonstrate the presence of a North-South cline in eastern Kansas as well as to distinguish among three paleo-environments differing in age by about 100,000 years. Drawing from data for laboratory cultured bryozoans, he demonstrated recognition of the retention of parental stock attributes despite potential convergence induced by altered environmental parameters.


NOTE: FOR 911 EMERGENCY PHONE CALLS
When dialing 911 for emergencies, the Chicago Police Department has advised us to give as our address 424 East McFetridge. This is the Museum's address in their computer -- use of another address could lead to a delay in their response time.

STAFF IN THE ARTS

New Botanic Art, a show of seventy paintings sponsored by the American Society of Botanical Artists (ASBA), runs at the Chicago Botanic Garden through June 8 and includes the Award of Excellence winning painting *Datura meteloides* by **Marlene Hill Donnelly** (Geology illustrator).

HAITIAN ARTS EXHIBIT EXTENDED

The office of Special Exhibits is pleased to announce the extension of **Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou.** The exhibit will be on display here at the Field through August 3, 1997.

FIELD MUSEUM FAN MAIL

Sent to **John McCarter:**

Dear John:

This past Saturday, Winnie and I had guests in from out of town and we took them to your marvelous museum.

At 11:00 a.m. we had the distinct pleasure of enjoying the "Highlights of The Field Museum" tour led by **Leonore Levit.** Ms. Levit was absolutely superb and what a tremendous credit to your great museum!

Congratulations to you and your staff for having such an exciting and knowledgeable person involved in tour leadership.

Attention All Departments!

Time for Spring cleaning

If anyone has anything appropriate for the Members' Night giveaway table that they would like to donate (old posters, cards, publications, buttons, etc.) please contact the Membership Department (x453) or leave a message. Thank you!

The *Natural News* is edited by **Carolyn Klyce** in the President's Office. The deadline for all submissions -- in WordPerfect on floppy disk or via email to klyce@fmppr.fmnh.org -- is Tuesday at noon. Printed on recycled paper.